

Fifty Caliber Shooters Assn., Inc. (FCSA) Position Statement

Join The FCSA

Since May 1999, the fifty-caliber-shooting community, including manufacturers, retailers and owners has been under assault by a group of anti-gun legislators and media groups. Their tactics follow the same pattern as their attack on assault rifles: First a firearm is segmented from the rest by certain characteristics. Secondly, with exaggerated and erroneous claims, this gun is demonized and portrayed as a threat to the public safety or even a "threat to national security". Finally, a ban or restrictive legislation is proposed for the purpose of ". . . making sure that these guns don't fall into the wrong hands." The latest attack on the .50 caliber rifle by Senator Feinstein (D-CA) does all three by putting them in a category of "powerful weaponry."

FCSA is opposed to her bill because the proposed legislation will be injurious to manufacturers, owners and our military-which relies on both the manufacturers and shooters for research, development and production. We also oppose the bill because by creating this threat they get their nose under the tent to do what has occurred in several other countries, attack every center fire rifle cartridge as powerful weaponry.

FCSA is a Sports Shooting Club, organized in 1985 as a non-profit corporation in Tennessee for the purpose of promoting the sporting aspects of the .50 BMG cartridge. An elected President & Board of Directors governs FCSA with members in all 50 US states and in 22 foreign countries. The organization is comprised largely of professional and scientific people who support scientific development, public safety and American principals. They are from diverse walks of life including doctors, lawyers, scientists, military and law enforcement. FCSA has published a quarterly periodical, Very High Power since 1986, which serves as its voice and clearing house for technological development related to the sporting uses of the .50 BMG. The FCSA and the manufacturing sector maintain a liaison with the military and law enforcement and have made significant contributions to the information base of both.

In her letter announcing she would be re-introducing her bill, "Military Sniper Weapon Regulation Act" into the 107th Congress, Senator Feinstein clearly illustrates the type of inflammatory hyperbole that she uses to promote her brand of politics. While seeking support and co-sponsors, the senator states that her intent is to place the purchase and ownership of fifty caliber rifles under the control of the National Firearms Act, similar to ". . . machine guns and other Powerful Weaponry." She describes how easy it is for anyone to purchase the .50 caliber and how everyone is a "criminal, terrorist or a member of a doomsday cult." She quotes a "recent New York Times Magazine article", a recent "report by the GAO" and describes the dangers presented by "the Irish Republican Army, Mexican drug cartels and doomsday cults headquartered in Montana." She then goes on to say, ". . . the 50 caliber club will not face extinction."

FCSA is not aware of any incident where a .50 caliber rifle has ever been used in a documented criminal incident in the United States. FCSA has on more than one occasion presented accurate and verifiable facts as evidence to the offices of legislators to refute the sensational inaccuracies they have employed in support of legislation introduced to restrict the civilian ownership of .50 caliber rifles. The fifty caliber rifle is not the weapon of choice by criminals. The gun is very heavy (25-50 lbs.) and very expensive (\$2000 to \$10,000). Every person who purchases a fifty caliber rifle must go through the exact same process that everyone else has to when purchasing any firearm in the United States. This includes age limitations, waiting periods and background checks.

FCSA is opposed to having the fifty caliber rifle placed under the control of the National Firearms Act. Contrary to the inflammatory claims made by Senator Feinstein and several of her colleagues, there is no "crisis" associated with the .50 caliber rifle. Placing the fifty caliber rifle under the control of the National Firearms Act will have severe impact on owners and manufacturers. First, it will seriously impact the manufacturers who rely on civilian sales to maintain a continuous production line. Our military preparedness relies on continuous production lines for spares, support training and parts. It will restrict the ability of members of FCSA to travel from state to state with their guns, limit who is allowed to shoot their guns and impose upon them restrictive tax requirements. It would seriously impact 20% of our members who live within one of the nine (9) states that refuse to issue permits for guns registered under the act. The effects of this legislation would be to further restrict the freedom of legitimate gun owners in America and to create one more avenue for an honest citizen to be legislated as a felon.

The inflammatory remarks and scare tactics used by Senator Feinstein are the same used several times before by her colleagues promoting gun control at any cost. The same tactics are used by major news organizations in their "special reports" documenting the .50 caliber rifle. They capitalize by using trusted positions of elected office and a captive audience of viewers to distort the subject to an uninformed public. They demonize and use inflammatory language to create a "crisis" that begs for legislative controls. These legislative controls equate to a blatant attack on the 2nd Amendment.

Fifty Caliber Shooter's Assn., Inc. is an organization of highly motivated individuals incorporating .50-caliber-rifle shooting at extreme long distance as their vehicle in pursuit of technical & scientific knowledge. Our hobby is about engineering, mathematics and physics, not crime or shooting per se. Our sport is an extreme sport not enjoyed by everyone. It's much like mountain climbing, skydiving and snowboard surfing from a tall mountain peak.

US Postal stamps commemorate extreme sports! ESPN TV hosts the summer and winter XGames! To many, extreme sports strain the imagination, but they are part of the American sports family. Fifty caliber long range shooting is no different.

Since 1983 every other American sport (cheerleading, gymnastics, soccer, swimming, baseball, etc.) has suffered fatalities and catastrophic injuries. Our sport has had none.

FCSA focuses on the technical aspects of rifle design and precision ammunition for constructive applications within lawful limits and promotes these concepts through legitimate competitive shooting events. Ultra-long range shooting is a sport enjoyed by responsible, peaceful men & women from all walks of life. We believe America's uniqueness and strength is tied to its tolerance of diversity in beliefs, cultures, customs, ethnicity, politics and sports enjoyed by its citizens.

by John Burt

Fifty Caliber Institute